

2025 ECONOMIC REPORT

WEST CENTRAL REGION



The West Central Region is comprised of 13 counties in the west central part of Missouri. This region is home to cities including Warrensburg, Sedalia, Lexington, Clinton, and Nevada.

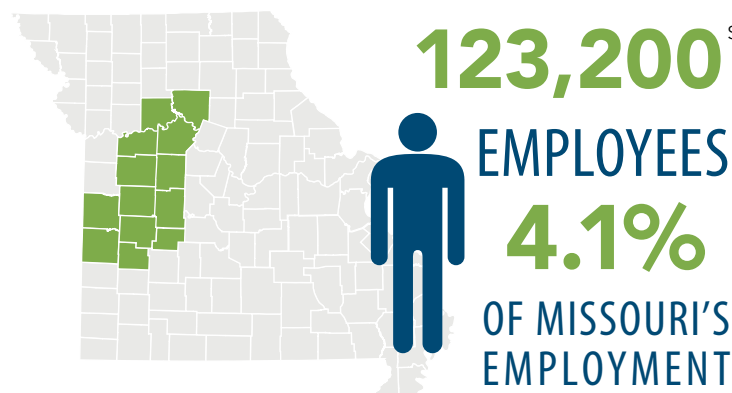
The West Central Region workforce has more than 123,200 employees in 2024, making up 4.1 percent of Missouri's employment. In 2024, 51.0 percent of the workforce was female and 49.0 percent was male, while the Missouri average was 50.1 percent female and 49.9 percent male workers in the workforce. The regional average unemployment rate for 2024 was 3.8 percent, compared to 3.7 percent for Missouri and 4.0 percent for the nation.

The workforce is getting older in the West Central Region, a trend continuing throughout Missouri and the U.S. In 2024, 24.7 percent of the workforce was age 55 or older, up from 22 percent a decade earlier. It was 23.5 percent for Missouri and 24.1 percent for the nation.

For the region, 8.8 percent of the workforce was non-white and 6.3 percent was Hispanic or Latino. This compares to the state averages of 18.1 percent non-white and 5.1 percent Hispanic or Latino.

In the West Central Region, 5.5 percent of the population (ages 18 to 64) speaks a language other than English at home. By comparison, Missouri was at 7.4 percent and the U.S. was at 23.8 percent.

The West Central Region has a higher percentage of the population with a disability compared to the state and the nation. For the West Central Region, 16.0 percent of the population had a disability compared to 12.6 percent in Missouri and 10.7 percent in the U.S.



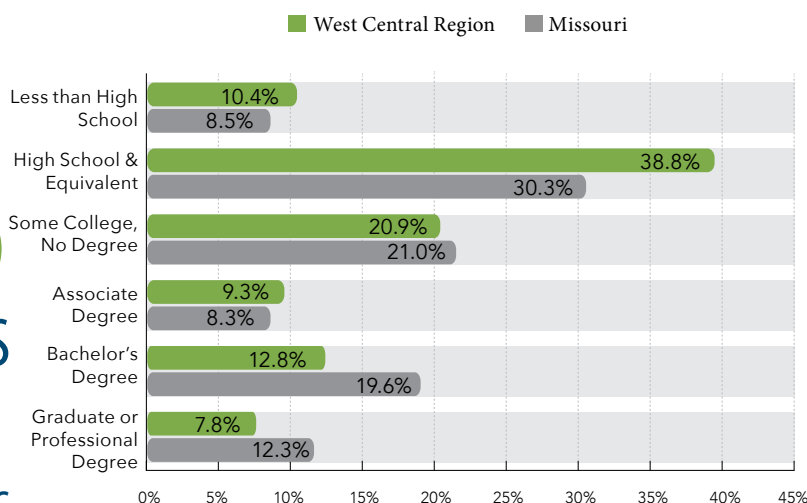
Workforce Demographics

	West Central Region	Missouri	United States
Average Monthly Employment in 2024	123,274	3,016,886	161,346,000
Average Unemployment Rate in 2024	3.8%	3.7%	4.0%
Male	49.0%	49.9%	51.2%
Female	51.0%	50.1%	48.8%
Non-White	8.8%	18.1%	24.9%
Hispanic or Latino	6.3%	5.1%	18.3%
Ages 55 and Older	24.7%	23.5%	24.1%
With Disabilities (Ages 18-64)	16.0%	12.6%	10.7%
Below Poverty Levels (Ages 18-64)	14.3%	12.1%	11.6%
Language other than English (Ages 18-64)	5.5%	7.4%	23.8%
Education of Associate Degree or Higher (25 years & Older)	29.9%	40.2%	43.8%
Veterans (Age 18-64)	6.7%	4.7%	4.2%

SOURCE: QWI 2024 Q1; PRIVATE OWNERSHIP. CENSUS 2023 ACS 5 YEARS DATA, LAUS 2024 DATA

Educational attainment rates for the West Central Region are lower than those of the state for bachelor's or advanced degrees. Thirty percent of the region's population age 25 and older, has an associate, bachelor's, or advanced degree compared to 40.2 percent for the state, and 43.8 percent for the nation. About 10.4 percent of the region's population age 25 and older has less than high school education.

Educational Attainment



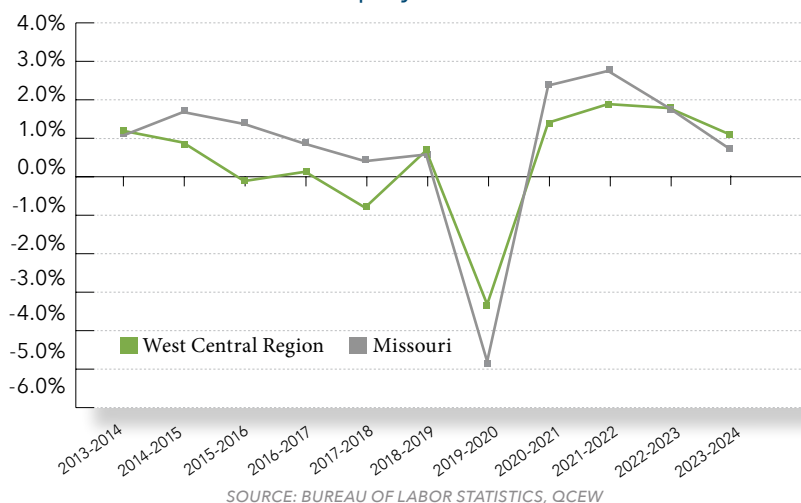
SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, ACS 2023 5 YEAR ESTIMATES

WEST CENTRAL REGION

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

The West Central Region averaged over 86,700 jobs in 2024. The region gained 1,021 jobs in 2024, an increase of 1.2 percent. Missouri employment increased by 0.8 percent in 2024. From 2020 to 2024, the West Central Region averaged 1.3 percent compound annual growth for an overall gain of 6.8 percent. During that same period (2020-2024) Missouri's compound annual employment gain was 1.6 percent for an overall gain of 8.3 percent.

West Central Employment Annual Growth Rate



The *Health Care and Social Assistance* industry is the largest employing industry in the region with over 16,700 jobs. *Manufacturing*, *Educational Services*, and *Retail Trade* are the next largest industries in the area, each with employment over 10,000 in 2024.

All industry sectors in West Central Region had employment gains from 2020 to 2024. *Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation* was the fastest growing industry in the region from 2020 to 2024, increasing by a compound annual growth rate of 8 percent.

West Central Region Top Employing Industries

	Employment 2020	Employment 2024	Net Change	2020- 2024 CAGR	2023 Annual Wages
Health Care and Social Assistance	15,827	16,759	932	1.2%	\$48,984
Manufacturing	12,251	13,242	991	1.6%	\$57,528
Educational Services	10,003	11,217	1,214	2.3%	\$40,020
Retail Trade	9,160	10,764	1,604	3.3%	\$36,060
Accommodation and Food Services	6,028	6,904	876	2.8%	\$20,448
Construction	3,641	3,912	271	1.4%	\$53,868
Public Administration	3,778	3,830	52	0.3%	\$36,096
Wholesale Trade	3,066	3,138	72	0.5%	\$65,196
Finance and Insurance	2,358	2,362	4	0.0%	\$67,404
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	2,081	2,288	207	1.9%	\$74,988
Transportation and Warehousing	1,943	2,275	332	3.2%	\$47,424
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,869	2,128	259	2.6%	\$38,136
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2,006	2,019	13	0.1%	\$47,532
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1,671	1,706	35	0.4%	\$52,656
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	817	1,202	385	8.0%	\$27,792
Information	818	1,023	205	4.6%	\$57,684
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	595	691	96	3.0%	\$35,460
Utilities	615	650	35	1.1%	\$74,400
Management of Companies and Enterprises	238	252	14	1.1%	\$48,504
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	64	72	8	2.4%	\$62,436

SOURCE: LEHD QWI, 2020-2024 QUARTER 2 DATA, LEHD QWI 2023 ANNUAL AVERAGE FOR WAGES. ALL OWNERSHIP

LOCATION QUOTIENT

To understand the major industries within a region, an analysis of industry concentration or clustering can be useful. The Location Quotient (LQ) describes the concentration of an industry in a geographic region, in relation to the nation, with 1.0 being the national average. Industries with higher than 1.0 LQ indicate a concentration.

The West Central Region has higher concentrations in *Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers*, *Animal Production and Aquaculture*, *Primary Metal Manufacturing*, *Food Manufacturing*, *Machinery Manufacturing*, and *Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry*.



GASOLINE STATIONS AND FUEL DEALERS

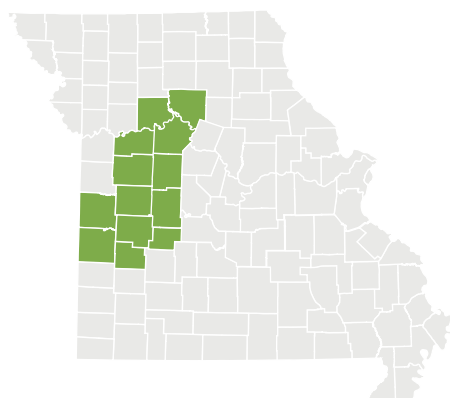
2024 West Central Region Location Quotients

Industry	Employment	Location Quotient
Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers	1,816	3.1
Animal Production and Aquaculture	460	3.1
Primary Metal Manufacturing	520	2.5
Food Manufacturing	2,285	2.3
Machinery Manufacturing	1,376	2.2
Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry	428	2.0
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	3,512	1.9
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	1,516	1.9
Crop Production	527	1.7
General Merchandise Retailers	2,811	1.5
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	1,884	1.5
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	1,671	1.5
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	1,104	1.4
Social Assistance	3,159	1.2

SOURCE: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, QUARTERLY CENSUS OF EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES 2024

WEST CENTRAL REGION

Projected growth in industry helps to identify future employment needs for an area. Projections indicate that the largest industry growth in the West Central Region from 2022-2032 will be in the *General Merchandise Retailers; Ambulatory Health Care Services; Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods; Total Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers, All Jobs; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; and Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals.*



West Central Largest Growth Industries 2022-2032

	Employment 2022	Employment 2032	Change 2022-2032 Numeric	Change 2022-2032 Percent
General Merchandise Retailers	2,961	3,432	471	15.9%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	2,350	2,757	407	17.3%
Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	1,790	2,092	302	16.9%
Total Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers, All Jobs	5,227	5,501	274	5.2%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,823	2,029	206	11.3%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	5,266	5,472	206	3.9%
Construction of Buildings	730	855	125	17.1%
Machinery Manufacturing	1,566	1,666	100	6.4%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	3,657	3,751	94	2.6%
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	1,682	1,767	85	5.1%

SOURCE: MERIC INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS, 2022-2032

PROJECTED GROWTH BY INDUSTRY HELPS TO IDENTIFY FUTURE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS FOR AN AREA.

OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS

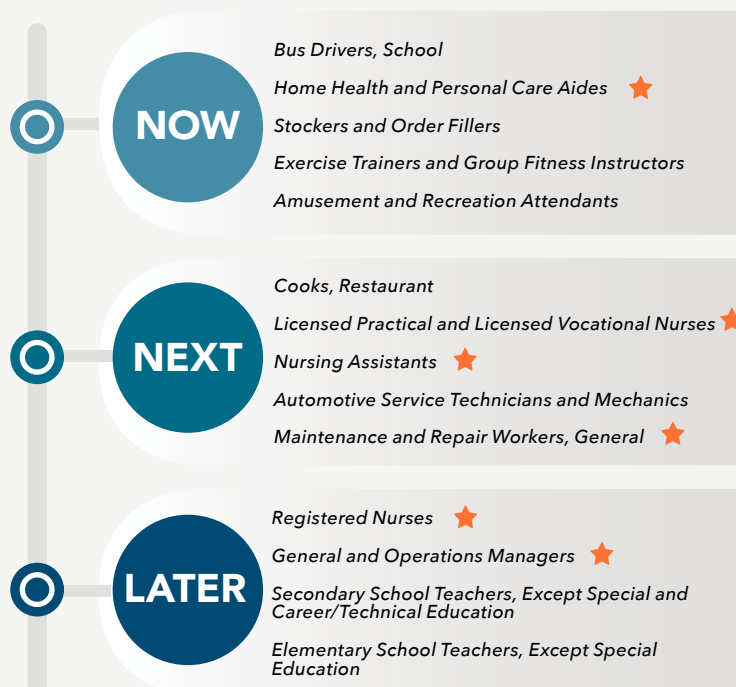
MERIC produces occupational projections that estimates labor demand over a 10-year period. The current projections cycle projected industry and occupation employment from 2022-2032. MERIC categorizes these occupations using its Now-Next-Later method to help job seekers understand the training, education, and experience requirements for various occupations.

NOW jobs typically require short-term on-the-job training, little to no experience, and/or a high school diploma. **Now** occupations with the most projected openings are *Cashiers; Home Health and Personal Care Aides; and Stockers and Order Fillers.* *Bus Drivers, School; Home Health and Personal Care Aides; and Stockers and Order Fillers* are projected to be the fastest growing **Now** occupations over the next decade.

NEXT jobs typically require a non-degree certificate, associate degree, apprenticeship, some experience, or moderate- to long-term training. *Nursing Assistants; Cooks, Restaurant; and Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers* are projected to have the most openings for the **Next** category of occupations. *Cooks, Restaurant; Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses; and Nursing Assistants and Technicians* are the fastest growing **Next** occupations.

LATER jobs typically require a bachelor's degree or higher. For **Later** occupations, *General and Operations Managers; Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education; and Registered Nurses* are projected to have the most openings. *Registered Nurses; General and Operations Managers; and Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education* are the fastest growing **Later** occupations.

West Central Region Fastest Growing Occupations



SOURCE: MERIC OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS, 2022-2032

NOTE: OCCUPATIONS WITH ANNUAL TOTAL OPENINGS OF LESS THAN 50 ARE OMITTED

★ DENOTES OCCUPATIONS IN THE TOP TEN ONLINE JOB ADS FOR MAY 2023- APRIL 2024 IN THE REGION AND WITHIN THE NOW-NEXT-LATER CLASSIFICATION

WEST CENTRAL REGION

WEST CENTRAL REGION LONG-TERM OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS BY TOP OPENINGS

OCCUPATION TITLE		2022 Estimated Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Annual Growth Openings	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Total Openings	Median Wages
NOW OCCUPATIONS								
Cashiers	★	3,133	2,788	-34	285	287	538	\$27,285
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	★	2,851	3,381	53	249	208	510	\$28,282
Stockers and Order Fillers		1,750	2,027	28	118	185	331	\$33,217
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	★	1,608	1,643	4	78	132	214	\$34,088
Fast Food and Counter Workers	★	928	937	1	103	110	214	\$27,343
NEXT OCCUPATIONS								
Nursing Assistants	★	1,437	1,538	10	94	116	220	\$32,828
Cooks, Restaurant		891	1,066	18	67	80	165	\$29,913
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	★	1,384	1,412	3	63	82	148	\$47,223
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary		1,005	1,007	0	57	60	117	\$29,518
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators		1,098	1,046	-5	46	68	109	\$35,320
LATER OCCUPATIONS								
General and Operations Managers	★	2,634	2,733	10	67	144	221	\$61,328
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education		1,749	1,767	2	59	58	119	\$46,375
Registered Nurses	★	1,574	1,759	18	55	34	107	\$71,889
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education		1,020	1,033	1	30	33	64	\$49,304
Accountants and Auditors		493	515	2	16	23	41	\$58,807

SOURCE: MERIC OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS, 2022-2032

★ DENOTES OCCUPATIONS IN THE TOP TEN ONLINE JOB ADS FOR MAY 2023- APRIL 2024 IN THE REGION AND WITHIN THE NOW-NEXT-LATER CLASSIFICATION

ONLINE JOB POSTINGS

Job postings are an indicator of demand and opportunities in an area and can assist individuals seeking job opportunities in current in-demand occupations. According to information based on online job posting data collected and aggregated from May 1, 2024 to April 30, 2025 by Lightcast™ for the West Central Region, jobs like *Registered Nurses*; *Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers*; and *Retail Salespersons* had a high number of job postings in the region.

OCCUPATION TITLE	ONLINE JOB POSTINGS
NOW OCCUPATIONS	
Retail Salespersons	480
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	330
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	260
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	240
Fast Food and Counter Workers	180
NEXT OCCUPATIONS	
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	560
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	380
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	280
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	210
Food Service Managers	200
LATER OCCUPATIONS	
Registered Nurses	880
Physical Therapists	210
Medical and Health Services Managers	150
General and Operations Managers	120
Occupational Therapists	100

SOURCE: LIGHTCAST™, ONLINE JOB ADS FROM MAY 1, 2024 - APRIL 30, 2025